1: Child: M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

only five children living, and the largest polygynous household had only four, but many children had died in infancy.

The attitudes within the household are much like those found universally between members of the same 'family'. Children respect and love both parents. Perhaps there is a little more respect for the father and a little more love for the mother, but this distinction is not carried to the extent which seems to be the case in more strongly patrilineal societies. The respect which a child has for his parents is plainly shown in his refusal under ordinary circumstances to speak their names. 'Even a child on being asked to tell the name of his father or his mother, will reply saying, "*Tate* (my father) indeed is his name." And if one asks again, saying, "Your mother, what is her name?" the child will reply saying, "*Mai* (my mother) indeed is her name."'[1] The sex division of Umbundu life begins within the household when very early in life the boys begin to be trained by their elder brothers, fathers, and other male relatives, while the girls remain or go about with their mothers, elder sisters, and other female relatives. Only the very small boys and girls (say under six or eight) play together. The age distinctions of Umbundu society are learned with the child's first attempts at language. Either his elder brother or sister he calls *huvange*, and he soon learns that the brother or sister younger than himself is *manjange*. Brothers and sisters, siblings or children of the same parents, 'are replicas of one another in social relationship, and . . . socially identical'[2] for practical purposes. Among Ovimbundu the principal differences are due to the two factors of age and sex. The influence of age is fundamental and is easily demonstrated by the fact that there is no word for 'brother' but instead for 'elder brother' or 'younger brother'. Within the household the factor of sex is ever present, but there is not the invidious distinction found among some of the more strongly patrilineal societies such as the Zulu[2] which reserves the more respectful term for the brother. Umbundu applies the terms *huva* and *manja*[3] to brothers and sisters without distinction of sex. There are the additional terms *kota* (elder brother), *mbuale* (sister), and the reciprocal terms *mume* (brother, spoken

[1] R. Kavita Evambi, from an Umbundu manuscript.

[2] E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (London: Longmans, 1936), p. 24.

[3] These are the root terms without the possessive suffixes.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

593 [561] only by a sister), and *mukãi* (sister, spoken only by a brother). In a polygynous household each of the wives is mother to all the children and each of the children is *huva* or *manja*[1] to all the others. 848 567 Illegitimate children are not stigmatized but since they belong to the mother they have a distinct designation.[2] Slaves or former slaves have a status within the household and village which to the ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all matters social and economic much as though they were members of the family. I have noticed, however, that when there is a call for labour, the lot falls oftener to one of these 'children-born-by-day'[3] whether he was a war-captive or a pawn.

567 595 178 Both slavery and the polygynous household, two institutions manifestly and intimately inter-related, are still a part of the Umbundu social structure, but neither the one nor the other now has the importance which it formerly had. Neither of these institutions is part of the present and personal experience of the great majority of Umbundu households.

Kinship

596 602 621 *Blood Relatives* (*Epata*). The relationships of the wider kinship groups are for the most part extensions of those of the household. The child learns them very early in life owing to the fact that the village community into which he is born is only a part of this larger kinship group. Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family (*oluse*), and the mother's family (*olutina*) may also be represented. The fact is that most of the adults of the village are father or mother to nearly every child and most of the children are brothers or sisters. Those of his coevals who do not bear this relation to him are otherwise related and are also potential spouses or potential relatives-in-law.

[1] This distinction *yesepahai* (lit. 'of the jealousy of women') may be made but it is not applied in ordinary speech.

[2] *Omõlã a ngenda-la-ina* (lit. 'child of goes-with-mother').

[3] *Omãlã-ve-citiva-lutanya*. Cf. 'child of my calves', Luganda expression and attitudes, L. P. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1934), p. 32 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

attitude toward one's blood relations than by quoting Mrs. 602
Hoernlé:

> Here, then, is a large body of kin drawn intimately into contact with the lives of each generation. Looking out into the world from his own home, the Bantu child knows where he may seek hospitality and succour of every kind; where, also, he may of right be called upon to render assistance in case of need. The barriers of reserve shutting off human beings from one another are largely down so far as these classes of relatives are concerned, so that for economic assistance, for friendly counsel, in time of sorrow and in time of joy, these are the natural categories of people to turn to, the core of people with whom one is close-knit from birth in a web of reciprocal rights and duties.[1]

The Kin

Relatives by Marriage. Marriage profoundly alters the relation- 581
ship of those who enter into it, that is, the two families. It must be entered into with great care and with due regard for all factors concerned in order that the balance of life may be maintained. It seems that the financial arrangements (*ilombo*) are designed to restore to the bride's family an equivalence for her loss, since marriage is patrilocal. The Ovimbundu consider mutual respect between the two families to be a necessary basis for a successful marriage. Respect (*esumbilo*) is the reason assigned by thoughtful [593]
Ovimbundu for the various avoidances (*oku liyuvuila*) enjoined upon the principals and their respective families. In the first place, the husband and wife must show their respect for each other by avoiding certain actions as, for example, either one speaking the name of the other.

This mutual respect finds its most dramatic symbol in the treat- 606
ment which the husband must accord his mother-in-law, the bride her father-in-law. They must avoid seeing each other, and if it is necessary to converse, it must be done out of sight, or with gaze averted. Both husband and wife must also avoid pronouncing the names of the parents-in-law. By the principle of extended relationships, this behaviour applies to the relations of the husband and the wife with *all* their parents-in-law of the opposite sex. As all the mother's 'sisters' are 'mother', so to the husband they are all *ndatembo* (mother-in-law). Likewise, the father's 'brothers' all

[1] In Schapera, op. cit., 1937, p. 73.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

among the Ovimbundu is 'grudge-building'. This is probably fairly common and often eventuates either in sorcery or in suspicion of sorcery. There is special danger of this type of reaction between men and women who have an in-law relation to each other. This is probably a principal reason for the avoidance with which these relations are so carefully hedged and the respectful treatment mutually enjoined.[1] Grudges are sometimes inherited through several generations. According to folk-tales, children sometimes bear grudges against their parents for real or fancied ill treatment.[2]

Recognized outlets for anger in frankly 'extroverted' form are found in war and raiding parties, in the hunt, and in lawsuits. War is no longer resorted to but up to the present day anger still finds a recognized expression in actions at law. One of the commonest of such actions is the accusation of sorcery (*oku sunga owanga*) already touched upon above. Church councils and meetings have taken over some functions of the traditional courts of law and this is probably one reason for the decidedly stormy sessions which sometimes occur.

The importance of wit and humour as an outlet for anger has been recognized. 'The ability to turn one's anger into a jest goes with the trait of insight . . . and is sometimes appropriately called "the saving sense of humour".'[3] That the Ovimbundu have this ability and use it often and to good advantage is very much in their favour. May not this be one indication of a considerable degree of insight which many observers have noted in the Umbundu character?[4] I would not claim that the Ovimbundu have made any very remarkable attainments in the social control of anger: their achievements in that direction may be slight when compared to some of the more advanced peoples, as, for example, the Scandinavians, the Hollanders, or the English. What is remarkable, however, is that they have frankly recognized the necessity for such control more clearly than have some supposedly more advanced peoples.

Adjustments in family life are held to be resolutions of what are ultimately sex conflicts.[5] Marital adjustments are of prime

[1] See *supra*, pp. 57 ff.

[2] Cf. *Journal of American Folk-Lore Society*, 1922, vol. 35, no. 6, p. 123 f.

[3] Allport, op. cit., p. 344.

[4] Some writers have attributed to negroes a quality of 'insight' superior to that possessed by whites, cf. article 'Insight, &c.' in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept. 1938.

[5] Allport, op. cit., pp. 345–53.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

593 [562] importance, but treatment of that subject must be reserved for another time. The balance maintained in the Umbundu social system, which has already been noted,[1] together with woman's important position in the economic sphere, give to the women and girls a relatively satisfactory place in Umbundu society. It has also been noted that woman's sphere has suffered less disintegration than has man's. Although the girl may have somewhat less freedom than the boy, her personal prospects are more stable, and in the long run more satisfactory.

Adjustments between parents and children among the Ovimbundu are relatively satisfactory. The fact that there are no specific father–daughter or mother–son avoidances or taboos, beyond the general laws of incest which nearly all cultures maintain, indicates an absence of strain in these relationships. In our own society adult–child fixations, and particularly the parent–child fixations, with the consequent repressions, are very common and are held to be responsible, at least in part, for much trouble including difficulties of adjustment at pubescence.[2] In traditional Umbundu society such fixations occur very infrequently, if at all.[3] In this context we should be reminded of the following factors:

[855] 1. The early and continued close association of the child largely (although not exclusively) with the parent of the same sex.[4]
2. The association of the child with many (classificatory) 'fathers' and 'mothers' which may result in a partial transfer of affection.[2]
3. The absence of fondling, kissing, and other close bodily contact in display of affection.[5]

157 The picture in these respects is not unlike that of the Samoans given by Margaret Mead.[6] In some other respects it is quite different but it is similar in the apparent absence of a period of adolescent *Sturm und Drang*. What actual correlations there may be between parent–child fixations and a period of adolescent stress I do not know. The absence of any such period has been reported

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 43.
[2] Cf. Allport, op. cit., pp. 355 ff.
[3] The proverbial inability of a widow properly to rear a child (*vide supra*, p. 102) may indicate difficulties of this sort.
[4] *Vide supra*, p. 98.
[5] No display of affection whatever is congenial to the Ovimbundu, except to babies and between adolescent age-mates of the same sex.
[6] Op. cit., chap. x.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

from several primitive cultures,[1] and some experimental studies seem to indicate that it is less general in the United States than had previously been supposed.[2] It is recognized that in this country parent–child fixations have produced many pathological cases.[3] With the practical absence of such fixations among the Ovimbundu, no such group of pathological cases exists. This is a clear gain, but there is also probably a loss, in that there seems to be a corresponding scarcity of the more or less introverted idealistic persons, 'the tender-minded class described by William James'.[4]

Ovimbundu parents proverbially love their eldest child (*nuñulū*) in a special way,[5] but there is not in their family situation as much invidious distinction as that which in ours often produces the domineering eldest child, the inadequate youngest, and others in the sequence with feelings of neglect or 'rejection'. The Umbundu family situation almost inevitably involves less sharpness of distinction, for although the eldest child may be loved in a special way he deals not only with his parents but with other relatives of their generation and with elder (classificatory) siblings and cross-cousins of his own generation. So, also, the last or youngest child of a sequence would hardly sense himself the youngest since there will almost certainly be younger (classificatory) siblings and cross-cousins toward whom he in turn will act as his elders acted toward him.[6] In a normal Umbundu family situation the problem of the 'only child', so acute in America, is almost inconceivable.

Some Ovimbundu, not only as children but also as younger siblings and as secondary wives, do suffer from feelings of neglect and rejection. I have not noted this from biographical or other direct evidence, except from observation of resentment on the part of younger siblings of fagging by their elders. Evidence exists, however, in the frequency of the Cinderella motif in Umbundu folk-tales. Many are the fables in which Little Hare (*Kandimba*), Little Tortoise (*Kambeu*), or Little Weasel (*Kavili*) gets the better of his stupid elders, represented by almost any and all of the larger

[1] Cf. Mead, loc. cit., Fortes, op. cit., p. 9.

[2] Gardner and Lois F. Murphy, *Experimental Social Psychology* (New York: Harpers, 1931), pp. 429–32.

[3] Allport, op. cit., p. 362.

[4] Quoted from Allport, op. cit., p. 362.

[5] Cf. the proverb: *Epungu liwa konendela; omōlā sole kunuñulū*, '(Of) corn best the first fruits; (of) children (you) love the first born'.

[6] This seems to be the state of affairs quite generally in societies having a classificatory kinship system. Cf. M. Mead, op. cit., chaps. iii, iv.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

157 538 593 animals.[1] Other tales with frankly human protagonists portray the same theme,[2] and there are a number of Umbundu adaptations and variations of such European versions of this theme as Cinderella, Snow White, &c. In some tales, such as 'Kalitangi', the hero escaped as an infant from an agreement made by his mother before his birth with another expectant mother that they would both destroy their offspring. Does this indicate a resentment of, or a protest against, child-sacrifice in certain Umbundu rites? I mention this as one possible source for the feeling of neglect and 'rejection' which, however, does not seem to be as acute or as widespread as in our own society.[3] The exact situation could only be determined by careful and extensive investigation.

593 152 [543] Adjustments between siblings among the Ovimbundu on the whole are relatively satisfactory. Resentment on the part of the younger does sometimes occur as indicated above. Overt sibling conflict has also arisen quite frequently in the royal families because of disputes over the succession. Instances of this latter type of conflict may be found in narratives of the early missionaries,[4] in diaries of Silva Porto,[5] and in other early sources. Conflict from jealousy arising out of the parent–child relationship, however, seems to be relatively rare. In a kinship society regulated by the hierarchy of age, jealousy between siblings does not quite fit into the picture. The two most common terms for jealousy over personal relations refer strictly to sexual jealousy: *esepa*, woman's jealousy; and *ukuelume*, jealousy on the part of a man. The other terms are somewhat more applicable but they belong less to household affairs. The meaning of *onya* is jealousy and envy, while *ocipululu* is covetousness and so belongs to the economic sphere.

572 [554] Friendship, especially between age-mates or 'coevals', has played and continues to play an important role in Umbundu social adjustments. Such differences as social station, family, distance of habitation, and even diversity of language and culture are easily bridged by friendship. Many friendships were formed on trading

[1] Cf. *Journal of the American Folk-Lore Society*, 1922, vol. 35, nos. 1 and 18, pp. 116 f., 140 ff.

[2] The tale of *Ñaña la hota liaye* (Baby and his elder sister) referred to *supra*, p. 84.

[3] Investigations of the 'foster-child phantasy', feelings of neglect, 'rejection', &c., reported by Murphy, op. cit., p. 415 f.; and by Allport, op. cit., p. 364 f.

[4] *Missionary Herald*, 1888, p. 242 f.

[5] In *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 1885, 1886.

582 incest (*oku nako*). But one may marry relatives of one's own age-level who belong to classes other than those mentioned, i.e. cross-cousins and, on other age-levels, father's sister or sister's daughter. It is said that formerly marriage never took place except between persons who could trace relationship in this way. Today this principle is very liberal in its application.(1) (It would be interesting to have estimates of the number of men who do marry first degree cross-cousins, father's sisters, or sister's daughters, as distinct from classificatory relatives of these classes, and the number who marry outside the *olusa* or *oluina*.)

583 Marriage was formerly arranged by the mother's brother (i.e. by the *oluina*), but today there is a tendency for fathers to arrange their daughters' marriages and to receive their marriage payment. (And also, occasionally, to assist their sons in providing marriage payment.)(2) *Ilombo*, or marriage payment, was formerly paid in cattle, blankets etc.(3) Today it is usually paid in cash, the amount being determined by the status of the bride.(4)

Polygyny

621 595 In the sample village (Ngendo, Kasongi chiefdom) described by Childs, of a total of 48 households,

(a) 10 households were polygynous; of these 9 contained only 2 wives or concubines, and the tenth, that of the headman, contained four wives and one concubine,

(b) 27 households were monogynous, and 3 more were occupied by widowers, all formerly monogynous. (The remaining households were occupied by 7 widows and one young unmarried man.)

Childs notes that the proportion of polygynous households in Kasongi chiefdom is probably higher than in other parts of Cwisbundu country for two reasons: the comparatively low marriage-payment in Kasongi as compared with other areas, and the proximity of Kasongi to Esele country, which has long been a source of supply for slave concubines. (Of the 10 polygynous households in Ngendo 5 contained at least 1 Esele concubine.)(5)

Avoidance between in-laws

602 Mutual respect (*esumbilo*) between the two kin groups involved is considered a necessary basis for a successful marriage, and is the reason given for the various avoidances (*oku liyusulo*) enjoined upon the principals and their respective relatives. These avoidances may be summarised:-

593 (a) A husband and wife must avoid using each other's names.

602 (b) The term *nisitambo* is used for parents-in-law of either sex, and reciprocally for sons-in-law or daughters-in-law. The term is extended to all those whom one's spouse calls "mother", "father" or "child" (Childs, p.52) and apparently also to those whom one's spouse calls *nanu*, *tatekui* or

(1) Childs, p.54.
(2) Panis, 1945.
(3) Cashmore, 1944, p.45.
(4) Childs, personal communication.
(5) Childs, page 30.

843 supposed to have intercourse with his wife during her pregnancy, but this custom of continence is declining.

A pregnant woman in particular must not steal. If she does so, her child will refuse to be born until some one present at the confinement goes out and steals something.

Eating the flesh of a hare during pregnancy will give the baby a split lip. If the flesh of the owl is eaten, the baby will have large round eyes.

The expectant mother must not sit on a mortar, a pestle, or a piece of rock; if she does so, labor will be prolonged.

[261] A pregnant woman takes earth from just outside her door. She drinks this in water so that the placenta will be delivered whole.

A pregnant woman is not supposed to carry anything in her cloth. If she does so, the child will have a long head.

A pregnant woman is a potential corpse. A man ought not to quarrel with his pregnant wife and if she says angry things to him he should not reply. He would not speak to a corpse in anger; on the contrary, he would respect a corpse; he must, therefore, respect a pregnant woman. It is a bad omen to see a pregnant woman up in a tree. A man who sees such a woman is expected to shoot her.

• [593] If a pregnant woman has scolded her husband and is sorry, she goes out to the fields. There she gets her cloth covered with burrs then returns home. If her husband begins to pick off the burrs there is reconciliation.

842 There are several arrangements whereby a woman who has borne only girls may secure male births, provided she can find a woman who has borne only boys and is anxious to have a girl. The simplest way of reversing the births is for the women to exchange belts. The belt is a string, or possibly a plaited fiber girdle an inch in width which is worn next to the body. From this string depends the woman's lower garment. A second way of reversing the births is for the women to make an exchange of food through a hole in the wall of a hut. The food is handed in on a basket tray. The woman inside the hut receives the food while standing with her back to the hole; she then places the food under the bed. The tray is handed back through the hole by the recipient who still keeps her back to the aperture. There is a third method whereby a woman who has borne boys may be made to bear girls, and *vice versa*. The woman who has borne only boys gives to the woman who has borne only girls, an arrow, a knife, a bow, and an ax. The articles given in return are a pounding stick, a broom, a tray and a basket. The value

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

105 562 domestic equipment. Ritual enters into the introduction of the bride to her home, as was shown by explaining the functions of three elderly women, who erect the fireplace, bring new fire from the chief's house, and assist the bride in a ceremonial way. If a husband has reason to doubt the virginity of his bride, he bores a hole in her cloth with a firebrand, and makes her carry the cloth to her parents. But the marriage is not necessarily invalidated, since the husband is reconciled by a return of some portion of his gifts to the parents.

543 105 Some light is thrown on the ethics of family life by considering the meeting which takes place in the men's council house (*onjango*) before the bride goes to her new home. Here in the presence of relatives from both families the father of the bride says, "We are taking these things for our daughter, we hope she will not shame us." He turns to his daughter, enjoining her to be hospitable, never forgetting to feed her husband's people when they call.

Minor incidents help in a study of the psychology of family life. When husband and wife have quarreled, the latter goes away for a few hours into the bush and arranges that a number of burrs shall be clinging to her dress when she returns. If her husband silently and spontaneously picks these from her cloth, amicable feeling is restored.

Analysis of the grounds for divorce shows that women have their rights, though the male is in the more favorable position. In Rome the legal rights of a matron were slender, but in actual practice she held an important and honorable position. Similarly the status of an Ocimbundu woman is higher than the divorce laws imply.

The human side of family differences was well brought out by studying the interference and indirect influence of relatives on the relationship of husband and wife. Details have been given indicating that divorce is not entirely a matter of adjustment between families; the village chief may be called upon to act as arbiter. The final ceremony of repudiation, at which the husband slaps his wife's back saying, "It is finished," is a public rite. There is here a close connection between family consent and public ratification.

Although a woman may return to her parents under certain conditions which justify the divorce of the husband, parents are not anxious to encourage this practice. Marriage tokens would have to be returned to the husband of their daughter; moreover there might be a difficulty in securing another husband. In this instance a conflict occurs between parental obligations and cupidity. This is again shown by the argument which always arises respecting

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

the custody of a widow. The father, the brother, or the maternal uncle of the widow may take her. In the words of my interpreter, each says, "It is better that you should take her," and at last someone says, "I will take her."

A chief of Ngalangi revealed the most important aspect of polygyny when he apologized for the fact that only five of his eleven wives were present. The chief was anxious to emphasize the fact that he had eleven wives, though six were at work in the fields.

When one considers the prestige of village chiefs, and further reflects on the desirability of maintaining this power within family groups, the institution of polygyny becomes more understandable. In addition there is the necessity of having women to cultivate the fields. A polygynous system does not necessarily cause domestic conflict, because each wife has her own hut, fireplace, and utensils. Custom obliges a chief to spend four nights in each hut in regular sequence.

A first and principal wife is not offended by the introduction of other wives, for these reduce her own labor and announce the fact that she is the principal wife of a wealthy man. When photographing the king of Ngalangi with his wives, I observed that he sent the principal wife from the group in order to adorn herself with a piece of cloth whose value was greater than that of the clothing worn by any of the others. Among the Vakuanyama it was noticeable that the principal wife wore a head-dress of clay with five horns; and in addition to this she had costly necklaces of ostrich-eggshell beads, also more of the coveted *omba* shells than were allowed to other wives. In this way the prestige of the first or great wife is preserved.

The persistence of custom, the force of education through suggestion in early years, and the power of social attitudes, are well illustrated by the survival of kinship terms and the classificatory system of relationships, with its marriage prohibitions and sanctions of an arbitrary kind. The strength of the mores and the fundamental nature of this system of relationship in determining marriage, descent, succession, and inheritance, are indicated by the fact that the system is unaltered after three centuries of contact with Europeans.

The rights of a mother's brother extend so far as a sale of his sister's children to redeem his own debts; and reciprocally he is responsible for the conduct of his sister's children, even to the extent of paying fines for the thefts they may commit. This prerogative and responsibility of the maternal uncle is fundamental, and around the trait cluster points of law and legal procedure.

[1874 - 1911]

THE OVIMBUNDU UNDER TWO SOVEREIGNTIES

593 591 604 It was then the father who normally exercised authority over a boy, and on the father's death a child or youth would join the household of a father's brother. Yet the right of a sister's son to the inheritance of the movable property and to grants from his mother's brother was counterbalanced by the latter's right to sell his uterine nephew into slavery, a fate from which the father could save his son by ransoming him, in which case the mother's brother would no longer have this right.[86] In this society, the mother's brother—sister's son relationship was fundamentally an economic one, in which the sister's son received assistance in the trade and inherited his uncle's gains in this trade, but could himself be transformed into a source of capital.

182 I now summarize the evidence on Umbundu social control and its relation with the trading economy. It is clear that the Ovimbundu belonged to the number of those African societies [642] with pyramidal[87] political systems and formal codes and courts of law, even though there exists uncertainty as to the relative power of the kingdoms and the sub-chiefdoms. Social control 182 also operated through the kinship system, authority at the 613 village level being in the hands of the head of the patrilineal group backed by the public opinion expressed in the men's house, and the dispersed matrilineal groups having sanctions in the right of sale of a sister's son and in the accusations of sorcery brought against those who failed to use wealth to aid their relatives. For the caravan trade to have attained the 182 importance it did there must also have existed something of a 631 *pax Umbunduca* stimulated by the existence of such ties as that between *tjiseko* partners and the 'international' hospitality shown to diviners, hunters, and smiths. Evidence of this *pax Umbunduca* is provided by the organization of caravans, and by the establishment of marriage ties between persons in different kingdoms, and between different royal houses.[88] [721] However, warfare was not unknown between the different

[86] Childs, p. 44, and my informants.

[87] See Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, Introduction to *African Political Systems*.

[88] Hastings (p. 1) notes a marriage between the daughter of a king of Bie and Ekwikwi, king of Bailundo (1876–93). Childs (p. 171) notes that Kakululuwa, king of Ndulu, was a sister's son of a king of Bailundo.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

father does not exercise great authority over his grown sons even if they live in the same village, nor does their living in different villages lead to a breach in personal relations. Sapapula who told me that a man should stay in his father's village till the latter's death had four sons, none of whom lived in Epalanga. Two lived in Menga (where Sapapula had lived up to 1946) and maintained friendly contact with their father. One who lived in Cela seemed socially as well as geographically more remote, and the fourth was a labour migrant given up for lost.

The preferential marriages[1] have continued in practice when most of the other institutions of the old kinship system have disintegrated. Their function is to multiply the relationships between individuals living in a particular neighbourhood, and to limit the socio-geographical range within which marriage partners are selected. Of a sample of 121 existing marriages 87, that is 70.3%, were with cross-cousins, and only 13.7% were with non-kinswomen.[2]

Even some of the non-kin marriages fitted into the general pattern of increasing ties within a limited social field. Thus in Epalanga Jaime (19) had married Delfina, a brother's daughter to Ndjoleya. They were not kinsfolk yet this fitted in with the pattern of kin marriages in increasing links between different kinship cores in the village. Similarly Costa (26) and his wife Nakalende were not agreed (when questioned separately) as to whether they were kinsfolk, but this is not really significant since

[1] I had been inclined to interpret these marriages as functions of the relations between kin groups. Dr. Mary Douglas has suggested to me that these marriages were in the past not related to any system of kin groups but had, as at the present day, the function of multiplying the kinship ties within a limited field. I do not know of any clear evidence which could at this time settle the point.

[2] I count here as kin marriages those between *sakaufiolo*, funeral friends, who though not kinsfolk tend to be assimilated to cross-cousins in social usage. 'Cross-cousin' tends to be at the present time a blanket category, and I have repeatedly found asking men about their wife's kinship status that they would first give some other term and then change to 'cross-cousin'. [Epalunie]. This explains why under present conditions the percentage of cross-cousin marriages in relation to the total number of marriages seems to be rising. Thus in 56 marriages (existing or terminated) contracted by 23 men who had taken part in the caravan trade, while the percentage of marriages with non-kinswomen was slightly smaller (12.5) the figure of marriages with cross-cousins was very much smaller (42.9) and the figure of marriages with kin other than cross-cousins, sister's daughters, and *sakaufiolo* was much higher (25 %) compared to the contemporary figure of 5%.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

On the village level, however, the importance of the mother's brother tie and of the tie between matrilateral 'brothers' becomes very apparent. None of Sapapula's four sons had settled in Epalanga, and his only classificatory 'son' was Gonçalve, own son to Mwehombo, Sapapula's matrilateral 'brother'. Seven household heads were sister's sons of Sapapula. This trend for matrilateral ties to predominate is marked also in Katembo and Mbunga, but less evident at Belem. Indeed, 'neo-matrilinearity' as a principle of village structure may be a general and not simply a local feature of Umbundu society, since Mr. C. M. N. White[13] has found that the settlements of Ovimbundu within Northern Rhodesia are marked by a predominance of matrilateral ties. This is referable to the contemporary kinship system in which the father-son tie is predominantly a personal one, with a limited extension of attitudes to classificatory fathers, whereas a man's relation with a mother's brother seems little affected by the question of genealogical distance. Perhaps the relations between the group of agnatic kin were so closely tied to the old village structure that when it broke up it disintegrated also the wider agnatic ties. Yet at the same time such matrilineal institutions as matrilineal inheritance and the non-repayment of loans among matrikin have weakened or disappeared.

Running counter to this principle of settling in the village of a senior kinsman who is likely to belong to one's matrikin, is the principle of cross-cousin marriage. 'If you have married your cross-cousin when your son grows up he will see a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there, and so he will stay.' That is, a man will stay in his father's village not simply by virtue of the father-son tie but because he will be surrounded by kinsmen. The relation between cross-cousins is one of equality and solidarity, expressed in joking and in burial services. To say that one stays in a place because one has cross-cousins at hand is to indicate an ideal of equal relations with a circle of kinsmen rather than attachment to the following of an important kinsman.

These two principles co-exist in actual social life. A man will recognize and respect a number of senior kinsmen living in his

[13] In letters.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

gramophone in a town rather than at a trader's near his home village. Most of the money paid for purchases at the stores is money raised by selling crops or livestock. Through labour migration there is, however, some transmission of skills; it is easy to find bricklayers and carpenters of a sort even in Gumba.

Money, rather than barter, is the principal means of exchange among the villages in the selling of local products, and even of meat from pigs. Payment for labour service, such as assistance in house-building and in bringing in maize, is made in beer, except among Protestants who substitute a meal. There is also a custom by which a household which finds, probably at the end of the dry season, that it has not enough maize will make beer to exchange on a particular day for maize.

Ties of kinship and friendship have some economic significance. A kinsman will help with house-building without expecting payment; likewise a man who has a cleared field which he does not want to use may sell it for 200 escudos (£2. 10s.) but would give it free to a kinsman. A man may make a charge for lending his bicycle, though this varies with individuals; he certainly would not do so if it were lent to a friend. Loans between kinsmen should be repaid, and a tailor with a sewing-machine will make the same charges to relatives as to non-kinsmen.

There are few occasions for groups to work together. The unit of consumption and production is the domestic family. Even here, the husband, each wife, and the adolescents have their own fields, though a man may help his wife. Such other occasions of mutual help, in clearing a field, which may occur between friends or kinsmen, will only bring a few, often only two of them.

The Ovimbundu I knew were (with exceptions) not avaricious or grasping; thus, beer might be given to people who have not actually worked in house-building parties. It is regarded as a moral duty to pay one's monetary debts as soon as possible. On various occasions I lent money to people who were pressed and I received back all the money lent. Borrowers insisted that borrowings should be written down, and that the paper on which it was written should be given to them when they paid, or destroyed. Making money and being rich are regarded with

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

with Adolfo, the small son of Jaime, his wife's brother, but when asked what relation Adolfo was to him, became confused and said, 'My son, my sister's son.'

There exist marked variations in terminology in Umbundu country.[16] For instance, *sekulu* seems to be used for mother's brother only in north-western Umbundu country. Elsewhere *mesu*[17] is used for mother's brother, and *sekulu* is used for grandfather. At Caconda, where there has been strong Portuguese influence since the eighteenth century, only the Portuguese kinship terms are known.[18]

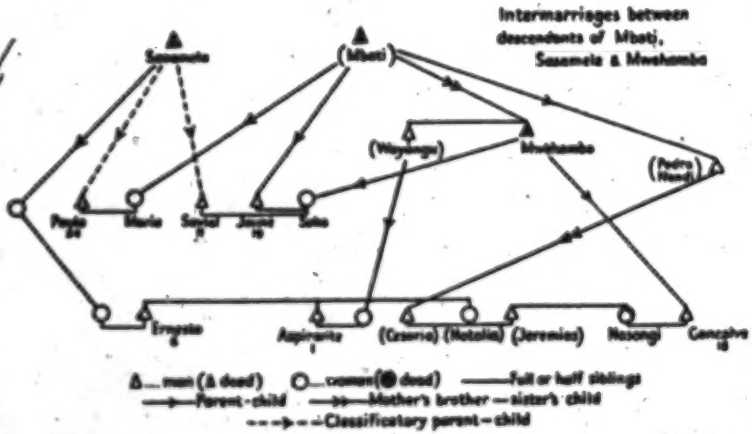

CHART 2. Mbati, Mwehombo and some of their kin. For Mbati (dead, non-member) and Mwehombo (dead, former member) see Chapter III, section 1. For Sasamela (dead, former member) and Cesario, Jeremias, Natalia, Pedro Nendi, and Wayangu (all living non-members) see List II (pp. 55–6). The rest of the individuals named on the chart are members of Epalanga. Paulo and Saviel were 'brothers', both patrilaterally and matrilaterally.

3. *Kinship Norms*

In this section I shall describe the relations that existed within the elementary family in the time of the rubber trade. A man

[16] For other lists of kinship terms see Hastings, pp. 83–85. Childs, pp. 47–56. M. Howse, *Umbundu Lessons* (Dondi, 1935), Vol. II, pp. 195–7.
[17] Etymologically, *mesu* seems to mean 'mother-person'.
[18] Private information.

[Text continues on p. 98]

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[1874-1911]

593 A man did not eat or chat with his eldest son or his daughters. Nor did a woman eat or chat with her sons. By 'chatting' I mean a prolonged conversation. It was not forbidden for people in these relationships to speak to one another. Nor could a man eat or joke with his sister (although chatting was permitted) or be alone with her at night. A grown man could not sleep in the same room as his father, except perhaps on a journey, nor could he wear his father's clothes while he was still alive. A grown woman might sleep in the same room as her mother, provided they were far apart.

The reason for these avoidances is usually given simply as 'shame' (*osoi*) although I have also heard it said in explanation of the father-eldest son avoidance 'If you don't have an eldest son you can't have a family', that is, it is the birth of his eldest son which gives a man status as a father. There seems to be no formalized norm of behaviour towards the *Kwasula*, but it is said that the youngest child is the parent's favourite.[19] When I asked what would happen if a man was alone with his mother at night the answer given was, 'Your father would be angry.'

It is evident that these avoidances would limit the role of the elementary family as an associational unit. This was further 575 limited by the institution of the men's house in which the men and boys from the age of seven or so upwards eat together. In this way, a boy was associated from childhood with the body of agnatic kinsmen from whose conversation he received much of his education in matters ranging from table manners to history.

593 The authority of a man over his grown sons does not seem to have been very marked. A father had first claim on the services of his adolescent son in the caravan trade; if his father did not need him a lad could travel with another kinsman and a grown man could trade on his own account. Nor did a father apparently control his son's access to land, since this was allocated by [622] the village headman. There was, however, one very important service a father could perform for his son, that of ransoming him when the latter's mother's brother wished to sell him as a

[19] I am not sure if the *kwasula* is the youngest child, either male or female, or the youngest child provided that he is male. I think the latter.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

slave. Once ransomed a boy could not be sold again. If, however, the father was displeased with his son's behaviour he could refuse to ransom him. When a man died, his adolescent sons would go to the household of a classificatory father and the children who did not yet 'have sense' would go with the widow to her kin, returning to their agnatic kin when they were older.

4. *Analysis of the Old Kinship System*

The ethnography of the Ovimbundu does show that there existed a double-descent kinship system, each individual belonging to both a local patrilineal group, and a dispersed matrilineal group, in which movable property is inherited. So great has been the impact of social change that not only have these groups disappeared but it is practically impossible to gain additional information on them by direct questions about their nature and functions. The information on kinship norms does give a somewhat clearer picture.

Within the village there was a very strong emphasis on the unity and solidarity of the men of the village. The men's house was the main social centre of the village where the men ate, received guests, and listened to cases. It was about it rather than about the person of the headman that ritual clustered.[80] The elementary family was not the unit of domestic consumption, and it is clear, from the taboos regarding contact with women kin, and the evidence as to the social life of the man's house that there was little recreational contact between the sexes. The concept of *ondjamba*[81] shows that the elementary family of husband, wife, and children, was morally and ritually significant, but many of the educational, nutritive, and recreational functions frequently associated with it were here attached to the men's house.

The strength of the agnatic ties in this society seems to have lain in the solidarity of the men of the village rather than in the patriarchal authority of fathers over sons. A son was economically independent of his father since he could trade on his own while his father was still living; the most powerful social sanction in the hands of kinsmen, that of being sold as a slave, was

[80] For these rituals see Hastings, pp. 73–76, and Childs, p. 38.
[81] *Ondjamba* will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[1874-1911]

593 604 in the hands of the mother's brother, though the father could, if he wished, intervene; and a man could establish a shrine of his own while his father lived.

613 It is not altogether easy to see how the matrilineal group maintained its cohesion. It was not the working team on which the caravan trade operated since a man's father had first claim on his services, and he could travel with other relatives. Within it alone loans need not be repaid and accusations of sorcery were made; with this in mind, it is evident why, as Dr. Hastings tells us, people tended to avoid the company of their matrikin, [578] and why most disputes arose in the matrilineal groups.[22] It 613 seems that probably the key to the functioning of the matri- 437 lineal groups lies in the details, not now recoverable, of the economy of the caravan trade. As everybody, however successful, was in danger at some time or another of incurring heavy losses,[23] an arrangement by which anybody who was in difficulties could call on his kin for help would be generally acceptable. The association of mutual aid of this sort with matrilineal rather than patrilineal kin would spread losses geographically and would exclude conflicts over currency and movable property from village life. Moreover, the dispersal of the matrilineal kin would provide an individual with business contacts over a considerable area.

5. *Contemporary Kinship Norms*

593 Much of this has disappeared. The men's house is no longer 264 the dining-room of the village male population. Men now often 178 eat with their wives and children though attitudes and practice of this vary between households. People in their twenties knew of the existence of these avoidance rules but it seems that the rules forbidding sons to eat with their mother and eldest sons and daughters to eat with their father are now generally ignored.

[692] [22] Hastings, pp. 18, 87. Disputes within the matrilineal group could be, and very often were, referred to the sub-chief and king. The account of legal proceedings in Hastings (pp. 139–51) suggests that a high proportion of the cases heard by the kings were to do with sorcery. In such cases the social extension of the matrilineal group beyond the area of the sub-chiefdom and the wider political integration achieved by the kingdoms 'co-operated' in preserving a range of social relations beyond the sub-chiefdom.

[23] Apropos of losses Childs quotes Magyar as saying that the Ovimbundu traded for excitement rather than gain (p. 104).

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

The rules about avoidance at night are still kept. The prohibitions on a man borrowing his father's clothes and sleeping in the same room as his father seem to survive. The prohibition on a child speaking the name of his father or mother reported by Childs is not, and was not formerly, found in this area. It is, however, wrong for a child to address his parents by name.

Children begin to work in the fields when they are about six. Occasionally boys of 10 to 11 go to the coffee fields for two months work, but usually boys do not go out to work until they are about 14 or 15.

A boy going out to work should ask his father's permission to go though this is not always done. Returning from work whether contract labour or voluntary work a boy should bring presents to his relatives. He would be expected to give something, say, a jacket, to his father, and a cloth to his mother, on returning from voluntary work and a shirt to his father on coming back from contract labour. These gifts should be made in kind. Money lent from son to father should be repaid, though it is wrong for a son to enforce payment by appealing to the post for policemen. A father may give money to his son for bride-wealth, and may suggest a choice of bride. He cannot constrain, nor could he in the past, his son and daughter to a marriage they do not wish.

A man cannot be said to have real authority over his grown sons. The stated norm is that a man's sons stay in the same village till he dies. He has no power to make them do so, and they are not condemned by public opinion if they live elsewhere. A man's attitude to classificatory 'fathers' is determined by the age, status, and personalities of those involved, rather than by jural rights and obligations. I have found men unable to tell me what had become of their own brothers' children.

Formerly when the father of an adolescent boy died he would join the household of a father's brother. Nowadays this would be much less likely, as it is common for such a boy to settle with other categories of kin, notably siblings and maternal kinsfolk. A man is free to stay with his brothers if he wishes, or to leave them.

While the tie between full brothers is held to be the strongest, as regards classificatory brothers there seems to be a slight

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

leaning towards matrilateral rather than patrilateral brothers. The classificatory kinship terminology, and the lack of genealogies and kinship groups, means that a man knows a great many classificatory brothers living in his neighbourhood of whom he vaguely recognizes some as 'close' others as 'distant', but with whom his relations are not especially significant. A boy or girl who loses his or her parents is fairly likely, judging from the evidence of Epalanga households, to settle with a full- or half-brother or sister.

Formerly, owing to virilocal marriage, a sister was geographically separated from her brother, and even if widowed or divorced would not necessarily return to his village, but might go to her mother's brother.[24] With this geographical separation went a situation of possible conflict, since the brother could sell his sister's children to recoup his own debts, and the shadow of sorcery fears seems to have touched this relationship.[25] The suppression of the rubber and slave trades and the subsequent disintegration of the kinship groups have removed the economic pressures which made for conflict between matrilineal kin and the residence rules which divided people locally into groups of agnates and their wives. The brother-sister tie has therefore changed its content, since it is released from the heavy pressures formerly active in the matrilineal kin groups.

It would be wrong to produce any such generalization as 'a woman must always be under the guardianship of a male relative'. A woman who is widowed or divorced or whose husband is away working will tend, however, to develop a particular link with the male head of some household, her own kinsman usually, except in the case of a labour migrant's wife, when it may be a kinsman of her husband. Thus in Epalanga, Augusto (25) aided the household of his absent full brother Julio (29).

Aid is most likely to be given to a kinsman's wife when the two households are close together. The underlying idea seems to be to keep the kinsman's household together rather than any duty of aiding an affine. For a widow or divorced woman or the

[24] Childs, pp. 25–37.

[25] H. W. Nevinson (*A Modern Slavery*) gives a complicated story which suggests this possibility (p. 101).

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

wife of a 'lost' labour migrant the tie with the brother or other kinsman will be more important, though the degree to which there is contact between the two households will vary.

It would seem that the present significance of the brother-sister tie is due to the frequency and likelihood of husbands being away from villages as labourers. The strength of this tie gives added significance to the mother's brother—sister's son tie.

A sister's son traditionally inherited his mother's brother's movable property, and during his lifetime might borrow from him without need of repayment. Against this, the mother's brother had the right to sell his sister's son as a slave and it was he who was considered most likely, both traditionally and at the present day, to practise sorcery against his sister's son. My informants were divided as to whether the sister's son can practise sorcery against his mother's brother. However, it was stated by Hastings[36] and by my informants that sorcery was only practised between matrilineal kin. It is not easy to see how in the past the relationship between a man and his mother's brothers operated—to what extent a man had particular expectations and obligations to one particular mother's brother rather than to the whole set of senior matrilineal kin.

At the present time the content of the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son seems very fluid, depending on age and personal compatibility. An important difference arises between one's attitude to 'mother's brothers' and to 'fathers'. There is no strong tie with one's mother's own brother, as there is with one's own father; on the other hand, a boy whose father has died is regarded as much more likely to go to the house of a classificatory mother's brother than to the house of a classificatory father, although, as has been noted, children and adolescents may settle with kin of other categories.

Traditionally the relationship between a man and his wife's brother was distant and reserved, the two men being forbidden to eat together or joke. Nowadays the relations between a man and his wife's full or half brother are often very friendly; quite often when one finds two households close together they turn out to belong to men related in this way.

A brother-in-law is not regarded as a kinsman—he does not

[36] Hastings, p. 87.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

for the bride's village. Here they may be greeted with formal speeches of welcome in Portuguese, a usage copied from the reception of missionaries.

One only turns up to a wedding if one has been invited, and not everybody who is a kinsman living in the neighbourhood is invited. Nor is there any marked distinction between kin and non-kin in the ceremony, except for the ending of avoidances and the recognition of the father's sister, who is recompensed for her services as nursemaid. Village membership is significantly recognized in the distribution of food, and the sending of the party to the bride's home to represent the bridegroom's village.

Umbundu marriage is virilocal, although a certain number of marriages are within the village. Apart from such marriages, it seems to be rare to find a man settling in a village because his wife has kin there.

Although during the early months of the marriage the bridegroom's mother may supervise the bride's work, the individual household is essentially an independent unit[13] and was not even in the past merged with other household units to form a 'grandfamily'. This independence is not isolation. I have only a very few times seen houses with any sort of compound about them. Much of domestic life, eating, working, resting, talking, may be done out of doors in front of the house. Paying visits is a great feature of village life especially when the day's work is over, although there is also a term *oku pasula*, to visit in the morning, referring to what are usually just short calls, involving the exchange of greetings. Perhaps the opportunity of calling and being called on is one of the factors maintaining the village as a social unit. The idea that a man should not eat with his wife still survives to some extent so that questions on this topic receive contradictory answers. Observation shows that even among the men who travelled on the caravans, eating with one's wife is the general practice.

One of the most striking features of Umbundu domestic life is the close companionship which exists between husband and wife and which is unquestionably a modern development.[14]

[13] See Magyar, pp. 281–3.

[14] The role of the *Ongange* as described by Childs and Hastings indicates that a man's normal companions both for eating and recreation were other men.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

Going round the houses at night one meets in one house a man and his wife sitting together talking, in another a group of men and women sitting round a fire. This is a very definite change from traditional pattern of social life in which men and women sat in separate groups, a pattern which is still observed at funerals.[15] A man who has a case at the post is likely to take with him his wife as a witness. A husband has the right to beat his wife, and she should show respect to him. In fact wife-beating is rare, and the relationship seems from observation to be often one of mutual affection and close companionship. Informants were divided as to whether one can joke with one's wife—some people may fear that she will cease to respect her husband if he jokes with her—but conversationally an Umbundu wife often seems to enjoy an easy familiarity with her husband. A wife may occasionally go and stay with her relatives, and in the neighbourhood she may pay calls on kinsfolk, friends, or co-villagers, without her husband. This contrasts with the way the white and mulatto wives of traders follow the custom of rural Portugal by staying more or less permanently in the house.

The wife has her own fields, and her own granary. If the marriage is polygamous, each wife has her field and granary. Her husband may help her in her fields, although he also has fields of his own. The maize in the husband's granary is sold to produce money to pay tax and to buy clothing for both husband and wife, and the maize in the wife's granary is used for food. If her husband is away a woman will buy her clothes from her own granary. The cooking of maize has not only a nutritive importance but also a social one since it is considered the service, which is specifically wifely. Thus, the explanation I was given for the lower age of marriage emphasizes this—I should explain that people returning from contract labour are sent first to the post at which they were recruited and may have to do an additional fortnight's work there. 'It is because of the hardship.[16] In the past one married only when one was fully grown. Now it is necessary to have somebody who will send food to the post when you come back.' 'Perhaps,' I suggested, 'your mother

[15] Childs, pp. 32, 35.
[16] *Ohali*, a word often used with regard to administrative demands.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

could send food.' 'Perhaps your mother is dead, and she has to think of your father.' A man should not cook for himself in a village, by a rule of convention which has no sanction attached, although he may do so when away working.

Clearing fields, house-building, and thatching are men's work, as are brick-making, fishing, hunting, mat-making, sewing, and woodwork. Beer-brewing, cooking, maize-pounding, and water and firewood gathering are women's work. Men and women can work together in most forms of agriculture, sowing, hoeing, harvesting, feeding small stock and treating tobacco. The division of labour is based on ideas of what is natural and fitting, not on any sanctions, mystical or otherwise. Nor is the division always strictly observed. A man may fetch water if his wife is ill, or simply away visiting relatives, and I have seen an adolescent boy pounding out maize on a pounding-block.

A man should look after his sick wife. There is a song which is sung about the married couples of the village, each being named in turn, which tells how the husband went to the post and his wife climbed a tree to get some fruit down. She fell down and hurt herself and then wailed because there was nobody to look after her. A woman who is ill for some time will return to her kin to get better.

The husband does not attend his wife's funeral, but washes himself all over, and then has to lie down asleep, or as if sleeping, during the funeral. Grains of maize and other crops may be, but are not always, even at pagan funerals, thrown over a woman's coffin as it is taken to the cemetery. A man should leave his old home when his wife dies, although this rule is neglected nowadays, certainly by the owners of brick houses. After a year or two, a widower should *oku wonga*, pile up stones on his wife's grave, a duty which has behind it a vague mystical sanction of illness. The widow of a hunter should be buried beside her husband even though after his death she has married again.[17]

A widow may marry again about six months after the funeral. The exception to this is the *inakulu*, the chief's main wife. Formerly, it was permitted for a widow to marry her husband's

[17] A case of this occurred during my stay.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

This strong pull towards the mother's brother is, however, marked on the level of village relationships as has been already noted. It is possible that with regard to co-operation on the domestic plane the tie between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is stronger than that with his sister's children. This argument would claim that the tie created by marriage between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is one of the strongest in the Umbundu social structure, and as a further proof (albeit not quantitively assessed) may be quoted the frequency with which two households close together turn out to belong to a man and his wife's brother.

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that the high rate of preferential marriages greatly increased the number of social ties between individuals in a neighbourhood, and brought a renewal of ties with distant kin. In this section various aspects of the relationship between husband and wife have been examined. Husband and wife co-operate economically and outside working hours may pass their evenings together. In a dispute taken to the post a man is likely to take his wife as a witness. Mystically sanctioned obligations do exist between husband and wife. While the elementary family is the main domestic type, households headed by women are also found and there is a certain amount of mobility of children between households. The tie of a man with his wife's siblings, particularly when they are children, is significant for the domestic organization of households.

Marriage is indeed the pivotal institution of the Umbundu kinship system. The preferential marriages do not link descent groups to one another; rather they bring about the local concentration of kin which makes out of many vague and insecure links a strongly-woven community in which both husband and wife can live with relatives near at hand.

Of the personal relationship between husband and wife it would be impossible to say as an anthropologist has of another African people, 'Here people looked for little in marriage. A man would turn to his sixteenth cousin twice removed before he turned to his wife.'[22] A man shares with his wife his work and leisure, is linked to her by mystical obligations which are not

[22] Elenore Smith Bowen, *Return to Laughter*, London, 1954, p. 117.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

on good terms with Guilherme, who was a 'father' of his, and even earlier in June part of the celebrations which marked the marriage of Paulo's son Jose to Pungu, a girl from Namba, whose mother had at one time been married to Kapapelo, took place at the latter's house. Most strikingly of all, as has been noted, Guilherme could borrow money from Bartolomeu and Paulo at the height of their quarrel. The kinship bond exists outside of and, it might be said, at a deeper level than, the quarrel, and the rebukes hurled at an adversary reflect this. Paulo did not complain that Guilherme was a bad cross-cousin; instead he complained that Guilherme was not grateful to him for having baptized his dying child. The motive for co-operation or conflict in everyday life is to be found not in the tracing of genealogies but in the tally of reciprocal services and grievances between two individuals.

It may be claimed that this portrait of the kinship system which emerges from the disputes as being loosely structured and lacking defined obligations, but providing an underlying continuity, is very similar to that given in Chapter VII, which was based on questioning and the observation of everyday life.

The significance of the conjugal bond appears both positively in the way Luanga and Sapapula both take their wives to the post as witnesses, and negatively in the way the hostility of Kapapelo and Lusase to Sapapula is interpreted as being inspired by lust for his wife. Even the accusations of adultery so readily hurled about in disputes reflect the stereotype of the adulterer as the arch-enemy, and likewise the arch-enemy of the moment as at least a potential adulterer.

One question remains to be answered. Was Epalanga a particularly rebellious, squabbling, divided, village, because of the presence of an unusual number of aggressive individuals? It is not possible to estimate the number of disputes per village, and the disputes which have been described were the most important of which I had personal knowledge. They were touched off by personal antagonisms rather than by structural contradictions. Yet they tie in with what has been said of the Umbundu social structure in earlier chapters to such a degree that they seem to reflect the lines along which any case of the sort would proceed. The weakness of the chiefs, stripped of